



CQ64

CRNE G. CHANDLER
Speaker

STATE OF NEW HAMPSHIRE
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

August 19, 2002

National Environmental Policy Act Task Force
PO Box 221150
Salt Lake City, UT 84122
FAX: 801-517-1021

Dear Task Force Members:

I am excited that someone is looking into and will hopefully be making some changes to modernize the NEPA process. A complete overhaul is needed that ensures protection of the environment, but does not stifle business as is happening now. It is possible to accommodate both concerns and we must strive to do so.

The best quote I have heard recently is "analysis paralysis" especially as it relates to managing our national forests. The same people who complain about the forest service having below cost timber sales are the ones abusing the rules and regulations creating costly delays, lawsuits, etc. all adding up to creating the so-called below cost timber sales.

Give the forest service the tools to manage the forest and responsible timber harvesting by promulgating a set of rules that cannot be manipulated.

Recently a timber sale in the White Mountain National Forest had gone through years of planning; through the appeals process; bids had been taken and then a lawsuit filed. This lawsuit was filed by the Conservation Action Project which is nothing more than a fancy name for an "organization" that consists of few if any people other than David Carle. He had offered no input throughout the whole process yet found a small and fairly (as I understand) inconsequential piece left out of the Forest Service's analysis. Since this was a lawsuit based on what the Forest Service had submitted through the whole process they were not allowed to add this small addition since the case had to be heard on what was before the court. Had these concerns been raised earlier the necessary addition could have been included and the project would have moved forward. The end result of this costly and time consuming delay is that the low bidder on the project, a small sawmill

CQ64

owner in NII who had been counting on the quality wood from the sale, now has to scramble to be able to keep operating and keep his employees. This is wrong and needs to be corrected.

We must not be any less vigilant in our protection of the environment, but we also should not create laws and rules that allow abuse by minority interests and put jobs and companies at risk.

Please find a better balance.

Sincerely,



Gene G. Chandler
Speaker of the House

GGC/dds

cc: Senator Judd Gregg
Senator Robert Smith
Congressman Charles Bass
Congressman John Sununu
New Hampshire Timber Owners Association